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General Assembly

Forty-ninth Session

Official Records

31st Meeting
Friday, 14 October 1994, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Essy . . . . . (Côte d'Ivoire)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 112 *(continued)*

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/49/400/Add.3)

The President *(interpretation from French)*: In a letter contained in document A/49/400/Add.3 the Secretary-General informs me that, since the issuance of his communications dated 20 and 26 September and 5 October 1994, Guatemala has made the necessary payment to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of this information?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 33 *(continued)*

Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

Mr. Marker (Pakistan): Pakistan has actively participated in the constructive consultations held by the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council. I would again wish to express our deep appreciation for the able manner in which Mr. Insanally, the preceding President of the General Assembly, and the two Vice-Chairmen, Mr. Chew Tai Soo of Singapore and Mr. Wilhelm Breitenstein of Finland, guided the work of the Group.

Despite the extensive consultations held on this issue, the gap between the divergent views held by various delegations was not bridged. Thus, the Group's deliberations could not culminate in concrete conclusions and recommendations. As is noted in the Working Group's report and the Secretary-General's annual report on the Work of the Organization, this subject is open for further discussion.

In any review of this issue, the proposed reform and enlargement of the Security Council has to be understood in its proper historical context and perspective. In the aftermath of the tragic devastation caused by the Second World War, the United Nations was created "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war". The Security Council was conceived as the principal organ for the maintenance of international peace and security. The presumption was that five permanent members, allies during the war, would continue to act in harmony. This assumption proved incorrect once the world became polarized during the prolonged cold war. During that period, the Council was unable to reach decisions on any issue that invoked the rival interests of the two super-Power blocs. Most conflicts were settled not by the Council but by the major Powers outside the Council.

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At the end of the cold war, and after the experience of the Gulf War, hopes were revived that a more confident, effective and strengthened Security Council could emerge as an important deterrent to aggression, and where aggression occurred, as an instrument to reverse it. However, subsequent experience has tempered these hopes and expectations. The failure of the Council to implement its resolutions on Bosnia and Herzegovina, its inadequate response to events in Rwanda, its inability to implement its resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir have all contributed to a sense of insecurity. Instead of a new world order, supervised by the Security Council, we are confronted with a series of disputes and conflicts across Africa and Euro-Asia.

It is in this context, and with a full appreciation of the Security Council's strengths and limitations, that we should seek to promote ways and means to make it more effective in preserving international peace and security. The Security Council has in-built inequities. It is composed of a very small number of Member States. It is divided between permanent and non-permanent members, those with the veto and those without.

The purpose of our present exercise should be to promote greater democracy and transparency in the work of the Council. Our aim should be to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the Council in accordance with Article 24, paragraph 1, of the Charter. We must avoid any attempt to perpetuate and accentuate the existing inequalities by creating new centres of privilege. Our endeavour must be to strengthen, not erode, the principle of the sovereign equality of States enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

The general membership of the United Nations has increased from 51 in 1945 to 184 in 1994. We therefore share the general desire of Member States to strengthen the role of the Council, as well as to review its composition to reflect adequately the increase in its membership, particularly of the larger number of small and medium-sized States that have joined the United Nations.

The Council's current composition lacks balance in terms of geographic distribution. However, any attempt to provide greater representation to various regions should reflect the circumstances existing within each region. The arguments for equitable regional representation must be viewed in the context of the legitimate concerns of all Member States within the region concerned. The accommodation of regional representation should not fuel tendencies towards hegemony and domination which are manifest in some regions. Again, our approach must uphold the sovereign equality of States, large or small.

We must bear in mind that this item was originally inscribed to consider an increase in the non-permanent membership of the Security Council. We should not allow the present consultations to be taken over to accommodate the objectives of only a few countries. An increase in the permanent membership of the Council, instead of enhancing the Council's effectiveness, would serve only to alienate the small and medium-sized countries that constitute a majority in the General Assembly.

Some concepts for creating new categories, such as regional or semi-permanent members, have been introduced. They need further discussion and intensive consultations. The criteria for non-permanent membership, in addition to those contained in Article 23 of the Charter, require to be more seriously applied. These criteria clearly imply that, in accordance with Articles 24 and 25, Member States represented in the Council must be willing to act on behalf of all United Nations Member States in a prompt and effective manner and, more important, that they will consistently implement the decisions of the Council. Those States that continue to flout the principles of the Charter and to defy the resolutions of the Security Council cannot aspire to serve as the guardians of peace on the Security Council.

Obviously, the size of a reformed Security Council would be central to the reform package. The Council should be kept small enough to guarantee efficiency and effectiveness, but it should be large enough to ensure adequate representation of the small and medium-sized States. However, in addition to the size of the Council there are other aspects that need equal attention in the reform process.

Any meaningful review of the functioning of the Council should encompass the broader and vital issues of democratization and transparency in the decision-making process. During the consultations held by the Working Group, many proposals have been put forward which can facilitate the involvement of the general membership in the Council's decision-making process.

Democratization can be achieved by redefining the Council's relationship with the General Assembly and with other United Nations bodies. A fresh look should be given to Articles 11, 12 and 24 of the Charter, with a view to evolving a joint working relationship between the

Council and the General Assembly in the maintenance of international peace and security. An effective mechanism can be established to convey to the Council the General Assembly's views and recommendations on peace and security as a means of enhancing the participation of the general membership of our Organization in the Council's decision-making process. Instead of the present practice of a pro-forma discussion of the Council's annual report, the General Assembly should discuss it more substantively and critically, in accordance with Articles 11, 14 and 35 of the Charter. A working group of the Assembly could be created to analyse the Council's report before its consideration in the plenary Assembly.

The Open-ended Working Group could also examine the possibility of creating a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly under Article 22 which could consider and discuss questions related to international peace and security that might be brought before it by a Member of the United Nations or of the Security Council, as provided in the Charter. In addition, the Presidents of the Security Council and the General Assembly should meet regularly to coordinate the work of the two bodies.

The linkage between economic and social problems and political upheavals in various parts of the world is all too obvious. There is an urgent need to strengthen the relationship between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, so that economic and social factors are accorded their due weight in decisions relating to international peace and security. There is legitimate reason to fear that the economic crises of today — debt, desertification, decline in commodity prices — could lead to the political conflicts of tomorrow within and among States. The Economic and Social Council could serve, in many cases, to provide the Security Council an early warning of impending upheavals and conflicts.

The onus for promoting greater transparency is on the Security Council. We are happy to note that during the last year the Council has taken many positive steps to enhance its relationship with the General Assembly. However, more concrete steps are required for closer consultation with United Nations Members, particularly the troop-contributing countries, in pursuance of Article 44. The President of the Security Council should provide regular and substantive briefings to the general membership on the major issues before the Council. A subsidiary organ of the Council could be established, under Article 29, to monitor the peace-keeping operations and to institutionalize a system of direct consultations with troop-contributing countries during the process of making decisions regarding such operations.

We fully support the position taken on this issue by the Non-Aligned Movement at its summit in Jakarta in 1992, and at the ministerial meeting in Cairo last June.

It is of fundamental importance that the outcome of our efforts be in strict conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. It must be based on consensus and agreement among Member States. A decision on this question that lacks the support of the general United Nations membership will be counterproductive. It could erode general support for the future role of the Security Council and cast doubt on the sanctity of its decisions.

In conclusion, I should like to offer a few comments on the pace of work of the Open-ended Working Group. The last reform of the Council took years to mature, although it addressed only one question: an increase in the non-permanent membership. It takes time to muster broad support for Charter amendments. Today, we are embarking on a comprehensive reform of the Council, including its enlargement.

Pakistan will work patiently and diligently with other United Nations Members to evolve a decision on the reform of the Security Council that advances the cause of peace, security and the aims and objectives of the Charter. We have to be patient in this important exercise without being tardy.

Mr. Gomersall (United Kingdom): Mr. President, may I first add my congratulations to you on the assumption of your high office.

The general debate of the General Assembly has reaffirmed, if reaffirmation were needed, the importance that Member States of this Organization accord to the enlargement of the Security Council. A representative and effective Security Council is clearly in the interests of all.

My delegation believes that there has been genuine progress over the last year in increasing common understanding of the issues, and that we have now reached the stage where we should be able to move beyond the delivery of prepared statements and begin to look at ways of resolving the important outstanding questions in a substantive way. My Government's position on most aspects of the enlargement question has

already been set out in detail in the Open-ended Working Group. But it is probably worth recalling our view that any enlargement of the Council should be relatively limited, to around 19 or 20 members, so that the Council's effectiveness is not jeopardized; and that if consensus can be reached certain countries, by virtue of their global interests and their contribution to international security and to United Nations operations, should be invited to accept the responsibilities of permanent membership. In that context, we would support the permanent membership of Japan and Germany.

Concerning "Other related matters", the Security Council, through the work of its informal Working Group concerning the Council's documentation and other procedural questions, has taken a number of steps over the last year to increase the transparency of Council activities. Priority has also been given to efforts to enhance arrangements for consultation of troop contributors. My Government supports the proposal that the Secretariat should, as a matter of course, convene meetings with troop contributors and members of the Council for the exchange of information and views in good time in advance of decisions by the Council on the extension or termination of, or significant change in, the mandate of peace-keeping operations. These issues will no doubt be further discussed during the debate on the report of the Council to the Assembly on 26 October. But I would like to reaffirm my delegation's commitment to continuing to support the Council's efforts to enhance transparency, while doing nothing that would damage its efficiency and effectiveness.

Although the task before the Open-ended Working Group remains a difficult and sensitive one, we were glad to note that there was some convergence of views in the course of its work this year on the nature of the enlargement that might be achieved. We must maintain the momentum of this work in the weeks and months ahead, supplemented, where possible, by informal consultations to seek out areas of possible agreement. Next year's fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations will be a significant milestone in our debate. My delegation will work with others to achieve, if possible, a positive outcome on this most important question.

Mr. Noterdaeme (Belgium) *(interpretation from French)*: On 14 September last, the General Assembly took note of the report (A/48/47) of the Open-ended Working Group, which was instructed, in pursuance of resolution 48/26, to consider all aspects of the question of increase of the membership of the Security Council, and other matters related to the Security Council. This report illustrates the divergences that persist regarding various aspects of reform of the Security Council, whose complexity and sensitive nature are clear to all.

The General Assembly decided that the Working Group should continue its consultations during the forty-ninth session and submit a further report before the end of the session. As in the past, Belgium will participate in those consultations actively and in a spirit of consensus.

I want to take this opportunity to recall the main lines of Belgium's thinking on reform of the Security Council. Belgium considers that Security Council reform should not betray the spirit of the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations that specify the composition and mandate of this principal organ of the United Nations. The maintenance of international peace and security is one of the main purposes of the Charter to which Belgium attaches paramount importance.

The current system of collective security controlled by the Security Council is imperfect to be sure. But it has the merit of being the only universal tool for conflict management. In view of the continuing threat of crisis facing the international community, the Security Council's effectiveness and capacity for action must be preserved. For Belgium, therefore, the present debate on reform of the Security Council should always be directed at strengthening the Council's action for the maintenance of international peace and security. While the faults and shortcomings of the system should be eliminated to the extent possible, we should not forget that the main purpose of this exercise is the maintenance of international peace and security.

Past, present and, no doubt, future imperfections in the collective-security system oblige us to lower our sights somewhat. Belgium is convinced that the best basis for reforming the Security Council is pragmatism, not prejudgements and highly detailed theorizing. Like the United Nations itself, the Council is but a reflection of the relations among States Members of the Organization. Recent developments in those relations make it imperative that the Council be adapted to the new challenges before it. But we would certainly risk failure if we tried to use this need for legitimate change to launch a real revolution, which would be unrealistic given the difficulty of attaining its objectives.

That is the conceptual approach that Belgium thinks should guide future work on the reform of the Security

Council; on the basis of that approach let me outline some of the practical outcomes of such reform.

First of all, if it is the view that the recent growth in the membership of the United Nations must be reflected in increased membership of the Security Council, Belgium continues to favour a limited increase. We consider that an increase of from two to five additional members would seem most appropriate to respond both to the Council's need for effectiveness and to the need for better representativity.

Secondly, as my Minister for Foreign Affairs said recently in this Hall, the international community would do well to grant permanent membership to two economic Powers whose positive role in world affairs has long been recognized. As the Secretary-General observed in his most recent report on the work of the Organization, economic and social development contribute to strengthening the maintenance of international peace and security. Hence, surely it is reasonable to give a special place on the Council to those who are in a position to support such economic and social development, on the same conditions as those applying to the five present permanent members. Moreover, an additional non-permanent seat should be granted to the regions that consider themselves under-represented.

Thirdly, the distinction between permanent and non-permanent members should remain unchanged. It is an established state of affairs that is accepted by all. To try to modify it by creating a new category of membership would spark an unpredictable debate on determining the new criteria.

Fourthly, the Working Group's experience shows the difficulty of achieving concurrent consensus on all aspects of Security Council reform. While we recognize that all the aspects of this reform are equally valuable, perhaps we could gradually identify those on which consensus is in sight while also continuing our efforts to narrow the remaining differences on other aspects.

It was my purpose today to reiterate Belgium's interest in the question of reform of the Security Council. With further Working Group consultations in view, I wanted to recall our conceptual approach and some of its practical results. For Belgium, realism continues to be the most reasonable approach if we want to achieve reform of the Security Council, and particularly if we want to retain some influence on the ongoing process. For some, the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations could be the setting for Security Council reform. Certainly, Belgium would favour reform of the Security Council coinciding, if possible, with the marking of the Organization's half century.

Mr. Wang Xuexian (China) *(interpretation from Chinese)*: The Chinese delegation welcomes the continued consideration at the current session of the General Assembly of the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council. Here, we would also like to welcome the first report submitted by the Open-ended Working Group set up in accordance with General Assembly resolution 48/26. We appreciate the large amount of work the Working Group has managed to accomplish under the guidance of His Excellency Mr. Samuel R. Insanally, President of the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session, and of the two Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group, the Permanent Representatives of Finland and Singapore.

China is in favour of Security Council reform. In our view, necessary reform of the Security Council must be carried out because of the need to adapt the Council to the changed world situation and to meet the grave challenges before us. The Chinese delegation is of the view that appropriate expansion of the Security Council and needed improvement of its working methods should aim, first of all, at improving the Council's representation so that it will better reflect the collective will and common aspiration of the States Members of the United Nations, and secondly, at enhancing the Council's effectiveness and efficiency so as to maintain and strengthen its positive role in world affairs in the new situation and to enable it to perform more effectively the various tasks mandated by the United Nations Charter. All reform measures should be conducive to the realization of those objectives.

Reform of the Security Council involves the interest of all States Members of the United Nations and is an issue of concern and importance to all countries. Any reform measures should reflect the interest of every Member State. In this regard, we are of the view that in any expansion of the Council, the principle of equitable geographical distribution should be observed and full consideration should be given to the aspirations and interests of developing countries, which account for the majority of the United Nations membership, so as to enable those countries to play a more active role in United Nations affairs. Practices which might lead to the creation of any new imbalances should be avoided. At the same time, we also believe that all aspects of the question

of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Council are interrelated and should be dealt with as a whole package in a balanced manner.

Ever since the establishment of the Open-ended Working Group, the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council has remained an issue to which all countries attach great importance. Many countries participated actively in the deliberations and put forward a series of specific proposals. At the same time, broad discussions were also conducted regarding an increase in transparency of the Council's work, the improvement of its working methods as well as the strengthening of the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly in the performance of their respective functions. In our view, these discussions are very useful for increasing mutual understanding and reaching consensus among nations. Naturally, different opinions by various countries also arise in these discussions on specific aspects of the reform and, in certain areas, the differences are fairly wide. This shows that the task facing us remains arduous and a serious, practical and patient approach is required to continue the extensive exchange of views and to seek common ground step by step.

The Chinese delegation hopes that the Open-ended Working Group will continue its effective work during the current session of the General Assembly and, based on the previous discussions, conduct a serious and detailed study on the reasonable and useful suggestions raised by Member States so as to formulate, at an early date, a reform programme acceptable to all States Members of the United Nations.

Mr. Khandogy (Ukraine): The delegation of Ukraine would like first of all to express sincere gratitude to Ambassador Insanally, President of the General Assembly, at its forty-eighth session, who guided the deliberations of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council. His skilful and experienced guidance enabled the Working Group to do a considerable amount of work. We would also like to thank the Vice-Chairmen, Ambassador Breitenstein and Ambassador Chew Tai Soo for their important contribution.

The Open-ended Working Group was, in our opinion, one of the most important forums at the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly. This can be explained, first of all, by the importance of the problems discussed and by the attention Member States paid to its work. During the discussion, a great number of proposals on various aspects of this question were made. However, special emphasis was placed on the problem of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council.

We feel that the outcome of the discussions is accurately reflected in the report of the Working Group, which states that:

> "While there was a convergence of views that the membership of the Security Council should be enlarged, there was also agreement that the scope and nature of such enlargement require further discussion." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-eighth Session, A/48/47, para. 8)*

The delegation of Ukraine agrees with such a conclusion. We believed and continue to believe that the current composition of the Security Council, its functioning and methods of work ought to be adjusted in order to make the Security Council a more representative body taking into account new regional realities and new participants in international relations.

The enlargement of the membership of the Council, which is a principal organ of the United Nations, acting in accordance with Charter provisions on behalf of all Member States, would considerably enhance the credibility and legitimacy of its decisions. It is essential, however, to preserve the effectiveness of the Council's work, its capacity to respond without delay to any threat to peace and security, to consider promptly such situations and to take necessary decisions based on the Charter.

Discussions held in the Working Group illustrated that to achieve this balance, which would be acceptable to all regional groups and all Member States, was not an easy task. There were various proposals concerning the enlargement of the Council such as to increase the membership by only a few States or to bring it up to 30 members, and even more. We think that a mutually acceptable solution should be somewhere in the middle of the proposed range. We have already stated in the Working Group, and we would like to repeat that, in our view, the Security Council should consist of 25 States. Such an enlargement would make it possible, first, to preserve the important principle of equitable geographical representation in the Council laid down in Article 24 of the Charter and would meet the interests of all — and I emphasize — all regional groups; and, secondly, it would

not hamper prompt, effective and resolute actions by the Council, which are required by Article 24 of the Charter.

In so far as our delegation represents a State that is part of the Eastern European regional group, I would like to draw the Assembly's attention to the following.

In 1963, when the first and only reform of the Council was undertaken, the Eastern European Group consisted of 10 States and was represented in the Council by one permanent and one non-permanent member. Today, the membership of this group has doubled, but for 20 States we have the same number of seats: one permanent and one non-permanent — which means that 19 States are competing for one rotating seat. Thus, each State of the Group has a chance to be elected to the Council on an average once in 38 years. Obviously, such a prospect is not to be envied. Therefore, we would like to stress, once again, that any decision on the question of enlargement of the Security Council should take into account the interests of all regional groups on the basis of the principle of equitable geographical distribution. Disregarding this principle would make achievement of a consensus acceptable to all very difficult.

The delegation of Ukraine would also like to stress that the enlargement of the Council by 10 seats which we, as well as a number of other delegations propose, would make it possible to accommodate some other formulas put forward in the Working Group and in the Assembly, in particular, the formula "2+3".

At the meetings of the Working Group and, indeed, in the Assembly, the delegation of Italy and a number of other delegations, including Ukraine, proposed consideration of a structure of the Council that would enable some States that make considerable contributions to United Nations activities to be represented on the Council more often. What was meant was a so-called third category of members of the Security Council. Some delegations supported this proposal. However, some other countries either expressed doubts about the advisability of the existence of the "third category" or strongly objected to this idea. In this context we would like to emphasize that we continue to find it useful and worthy of further consideration.

We are convinced that all United Nations Member States would benefit from the establishment of a third category. States which make a greater contribution to the maintenance of international peace and the achievement of other goals of the United Nations, and which carry heavy financial obligations, would have a better possibility of participating in the Council's work, and, thus, paragraph 1 of Article 23 of the United Nations Charter would be implemented more fully. At the same time, having been placed in the third category, these States would not aspire to the seats subject to the usual rotation in accordance with paragraph 2 of Article 23. That would allow small States to be represented in the Council more often and consequently to participate more actively in the work of one of the principal organs of the United Nations.

The question of the composition of the Council is organically linked with the voting procedure. In this context a number of delegations have expressed their views on the advisability of a modification of the right to the veto. This concept was brought to the United Nations Charter from the League of Nations but acquired a somewhat different shade of meaning in the Organization: from being a tool to maintain a balance between the super-Powers in the period before the Second World War, it became a mechanism for ideological confrontation between two systems in the post-war period. Through the replacement of confrontation by cooperation since the end of the cold war and the strengthening of the partnership between permanent members of the Security Council, an opportunity is provided to reconsider this mechanism.

In this connection, and in the light of other realities of the modern world, it seems appropriate to change the procedure that now allows one State to block the solution of a question that is of concern to the entire international community. For instance, consideration might be given to the idea of weighted voting. Another possibility is to entrust the General Assembly with the right to overrule the veto if it was imposed by only one permanent member. There are also other proposals on this matter. Changing the existing procedure would constitute an important element in the democratization of the Security Council in particular and the United Nations in general.

The delegation of Ukraine also shares the view, repeatedly expressed in the Working Group, that greater transparency must be ensured in the work of the Security Council, particularly in the decision-making process. We think that this would allow all Members of the Organization to participate more actively in the Council's work and would ensure stronger support for its decisions by all Member States.

The Working Group has done extremely important work. It has showed how States Members of the United Nations perceive the Security Council. The range of relevant views is very broad but much is still to be done to coordinate positions so that future membership of the Council, the efficiency of its work, and its composition meet the interests of all regional groups, all States in general, and each State in particular. Ukraine is ready to cooperate with other States for precisely such a reform of the Security Council.

Mr. Yañez-Barnuevo (Spain) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: Almost exactly 50 years ago, on 9 November 1944, the proposals for the establishment of an international organization were published. They were then placed before the San Francisco Conference and subsequently formed the basis of the Charter of the United Nations. These proposals were prepared, as everyone knows, in the Dumbarton Oaks talks, with the participation of delegations from the United States, the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union and China.

I would point out that the effort that has been undertaken by the General Assembly almost half a century later has not emanated from such a small group of States but, on the contrary, involves the totality of the membership of the United Nations.

I wish to begin by expressing my delegation's gratitude to Ambassador Samuel Insanally of Guyana for the devotion and hard work with which, as President of the General Assembly, he presided over the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council. Our gratitude goes, too, to the Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group, Ambassador Wilhelm Breitenstein of Finland and Ambassador Chew Tai Soo of Singapore, who also made noteworthy contributions to the progress of our work.

Since last year, when the General Assembly decided in its resolution 48/26 to set up the Working Group, progress has undeniably been made. The Working Group has held many meetings and has heard the views of many Member States on all the issues, which have thus been clearly identified. All these statements are a very valuable basis for our continued work, as are the documents prepared by the Secretariat and by the Chairman of the Working Group, Ambassador Insanally, and the written inputs from several delegations or groups of delegations.

As the report of the Working Group states

> "While there was a convergence of views that the membership of the Security Council should be enlarged, there was also agreement that the scope and nature of such enlargement require further discussion." *(A/48/47, para. 8)*

So we still need to go into greater depth and discuss further the scope of this area of convergence.

Last year the Spanish delegation outlined the principles on the basis of which, in its view, the reform of the Security Council should be approached: representativeness, effectiveness and transparency. We should also bear in mind that the final objective of the reform must be to strengthen the legitimacy of the Security Council's activities. These principles and this objective are still fully valid. With regard to transparency, on the initiative of the members of the Security Council, since last year practical arrangements have been worked out to make it easier for all the Members of the United Nations to follow the work of the Council; those arrangements still need to be refined and updated.

The Council also has before it proposals presented by the delegations of Argentina and New Zealand which, in my delegation's opinion, deserve to be taken into account with a view to improving the Council's monitoring of peace-keeping operations and consultations with troop-contributing States and other States particularly interested in a given situation.

Reform of the Security Council is a tremendously complex issue and should be approached in a well-thought-out way through a process of dialogue that will lead to understanding among all Member States. In an issue of such transcendental importance, consensus is essential.

Spain is in favour of a moderate increase in the membership of the Security Council, an increase that would allow for the more frequent presence in the Council of States whose weight and influence in international affairs is unquestioned and which have the will and the ability to contribute significantly to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the achievement of other purposes of the United Nations as set forth in Article 29 of the Charter.

The expansion of the Council would also facilitate equitable geographical representation, again in accordance with Article 23, thus making it possible for many

medium-sized and small countries that thus far have not been able to do so to take a direct part in the Council's work. In any event, it is essential to maintain the principle enshrined in Article 24 of the Charter that the Security Council acts on behalf of all the Members of the United Nations in carrying out its duties related to the maintenance of international peace and security.

Mr. Arystanbekova (Kazakhstan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

We must also keep in mind that any expansion of the Security Council should go hand in hand with a modification of the majorities required for the adoption of decisions. In this respect we believe that we can distinguish between three categories of issues on which decisions are taken: first, procedural questions; secondly, substantive questions not within the purview of Chapter VII of the Charter — fundamentally, matters relating to the peaceful settlement of disputes; and, thirdly, questions falling within the framework of Chapter VII, which presuppose recourse to enforcement measures.

Each of those categories of actions by the Council would require a different majority, which would be larger if the decision to be taken was more important. This would make it possible to establish that the so-called veto right would be applied only to the third category of decisions: in other words, to those adopted under Chapter VII of the Charter. It should be recalled that a proposal of this kind was made by the United States and the United Kingdom during the Dumbarton Oaks talks, but it was rejected by the Soviet delegation on instructions from Stalin himself.

The Working Group now has an abundance of documentation, including a large number of national replies containing proposals and observations that must still be made more specific. It cannot yet be said that there are areas on which decisions can be taken at this stage. This is indicated by the report of the Working Group itself. Nonetheless, there is sufficient material that, if appropriately structured, could enable us, as we proceed in our work, to identify broad areas of consensus. My delegation takes the view that the present configuration of the Working Group should be retained so that it can continue its deliberations at this forty-ninth session. In view of the large amount of work we must do during this main part of the session, the substantive work of the Working Group might be resumed in 1995, so that all delegations could be on an equal footing and able to participate fully and make their contributions. At the same time, we should keep in mind the need to give the public appropriate information on the work being done.

As to the format for the discussions, we need a new formula that, based on the proposals made at the last session, would make it possible to build on the work already done, without prejudice to the right of those delegations that have not yet expressed their views to do so, when they deem it appropriate, in plenary meetings.

I assure the Assembly that my delegation will continue to take part in the work of the Working Group and to extend the necessary cooperation to the presidency so that we can move towards consensus and reach generally agreed-upon conclusions by the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. To this end, we shall of course need the assistance and participation of all the States Members of the United Nations in a collective endeavour by the whole international community.

Mr. Aita (San Marino): Let me begin by assuring the Assembly that although our delegation's support for almost all of the proposals previously outlined by Ambassador Fulci and elaborated yesterday by Mr. Caputo, the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Italy, is not based solely on our great affinity with Italy: our undeniable wealth of traditional culture, our complex economic and financial ties and our common love of freedom, democracy, peace, security, human rights and prosperity.

Yesterday we heard from many delegations that have found the Italian proposal a solid foundation upon which to build. San Marino, which had the opportunity to participate actively in the Working Group on the reform of the Security Council, has paid particular attention to the statements made during yesterday's and today's debates, and we have noted an almost total consensus in three major areas: the Security Council must be enlarged; it must be made more democratic, with particular focus upon transparency and accountability; and it must reflect global political realities, old and new.

The large industrialized States have never really had any problems over representation — or almost anything else. They are big enough and powerful enough to take care of themselves. Medium-sized States, developing or industrialized, have done very well during the last 49 years. We wish them continued luck. Small States, however, have not been as lucky. They comprise about 125 Members and thus constitute the two-thirds majority needed for amendment of the Charter, should amendment

take place. These small States have not had their proportional share of representation on the Security Council. Equitable representation is the main issue; it is the reason for our presence here today, and it led to the formation of the Open-ended Working Group. It is one of the most important issues concerning the small States, including San Marino.

In plain, simple language, small States want a finger in the pie — the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process, to promote and further consolidate the principle of the need to defend all States that cannot militarily defend themselves, and to share the responsibility of advancing the peace and security agenda while ameliorating human rights and increasing prosperity in every corner of the world.

San Marino is a small State, but we proudly declare that our total contribution to the regular United Nations budget is higher per capita than that of all other Member States. We have no oil; our natural resources are small; but San Marino does what is necessary to participate financially in the work of the United Nations, simply because of our deep feeling for the spirit of democracy, which has lived in San Marino for more than 1700 years and which has prompted San Marino to assume its democratic role whenever it can. The Secretary-General addressed the General Assembly on Wednesday, urging Member States that had not done so to pay their dues. He definitely did not have San Marino in mind.

The Italian proposal would give small States 10 non-permanent seats on the Security Council, to be shared by 125 States on a frequent-rotation basis. In view of the considerable number of small States, that proposal is hardly Utopian. Nevertheless it at least guarantees us the enjoyment of our equitable rights approximately once every 22 years, should we opt for two-year tenure. Should we, however, opt for only one year, that right would be exercised in almost half the time, that is, once every 12 years for each of the 125 small States.

As for the election mechanism, that is up to the small States to decide. Either constituency or regional grouping would, in the final analysis, lead to the same results once a 22-year or 12-year frequent rotation schedule was adopted.

With regard to the transparency and democratization of the Security Council, we have repeatedly stated that important consultations held behind closed doors are here to stay. Their abolition does not seem to be realistically feasible. So-called real politics dictates otherwise. Certainly, we do not welcome such consultations wholeheartedly, but by their very delicate nature they are essential in every community, including a democratic one.

On 15 June this year our delegation suggested a stipulation that any proposed amendment to a draft resolution considered in an informal meeting of the Security Council must be made only in writing and be printed immediately in blue, thus allowing every interested party to have access to it. With the blue copy in our hands, we would be in a position, first, to follow the evolution of issues under consideration; secondly, to acquaint ourselves with draft resolutions; and, thirdly, eventually to share to a certain extent in the strength of the decision-making process, while keeping the informal, closed consultation intact. Would not the blue version of any amended draft resolution give us the transparency to which we aspire, without disturbing the imperative need for discreet and even secret negotiations, which are imperatively needed?

Briefings could be carried out by the President of the Security Council regularly, in the presence of the Chairmen of the regional Groups, to acquaint the President of the General Assembly with the Council's workings; it would greatly help us to receive first-hand information on decisions from those who had participated in their making.

Our delegation heard with pleasure the announcement yesterday concerning the renomination of the two Vice-Chairmen of our Open-ended Working Group, Ambassador Breitenstein of Finland and Ambassador Chew of Singapore. They both made remarkable efforts to make our deliberations, within the framework of our mandate, impeccable. When speaking of the two Vice-Chairmen, we must also express our highest esteem to Ambassador Insanally, who as President of the General Assembly, guided us all with his articulate eloquence and reliability.

On several occasions my delegation has expressed a desire to open the doors of our deliberations in the Open-ended Working Group to the media as a serious step towards the further democratization of our work. Nothing similar has been undertaken over the past 50 years, and, most probably, nothing similar will be undertaken for decades to come. I should like to repeat once again that the press, both local and international, are the backbone of our democratic system and constitute an integral part

of our healthy structure. Stimulating reporters, editorialists, commentators and other journalists to criticize our endeavours and comment on our performance may polish and renew our approach and conduce academic institutions to get involved in our work intellectually and academically.

Our yearning to develop transparency in the Security Council will not be truly helped if we keep our own doors closed while we ask the Council to keep its doors open. We should be consistent. We believe in, and are proud of, the presentations we make. We are not and cannot be intimidated by the presence of a journalist, a reporter or a cameraman. Our voices should be heard all over the world, not because we are only too proud of what we are undertaking, but because we owe it to the world to let it carefully watch us as we attempt to reform the most important body humanity has established — the Security Council, which is creating States, obliterating States, moving frontiers and working for world peace and security.

It is incumbent upon the President, and the President alone, to keep the doors of our forthcoming meetings open wide. I should like to conclude by congratulating him on his election. We look forward to seeing him play his role as a leader.

Mr. McKinnon (New Zealand): In the course of this year Member States have had a thorough opportunity to discuss representation on the Security Council and related matters. Those discussions were constructive, frank and detailed. All issues were traversed and all points of view were heard. This, in itself, is useful. We now have a body of debate on which we can draw in future discussions.

The draft resolution before us would provide for the continuation of that discussion at this session and for a further report to be submitted by the Open-ended Working Group before the end of the session. My delegation supports the draft resolution, but we believe that we need to think very clearly about what we should seek to achieve next year. There is very little point in recycling the discussion we had this year.

New Zealand reached certain conclusions from the discussion in the Working Group. These conclusions were set out by the New Zealand Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade in his general debate statement on 27 September. I do not propose to repeat them here. However, they will remain the focus for New Zealand's ongoing consideration of this question.

Various proposals were made in the Assembly's general debate — either specific elements of reform or something approaching a total package. We note in particular the very detailed suggestions set out by the Australian Foreign Minister, Senator Gareth Evans.

In our view, the time has now come for the Working Group to consider concrete proposals for reform. We do not mean that the Working Group should expect to take a decision on such proposals in short order. But concrete proposals will focus the next debate and will help to determine where the consensus might lie.

We say this because, in our view, if we are to make progress, proposals must encompass the totality of the issues that were debated earlier this year. Given the variety of perspectives that Member States bring to this issue, it would make no sense, and would not be acceptable, to seek to deal with the question of expansion in unrelated parts. If for no other reason, such a mode of proceeding could scarcely be construed as equitable. And equity — fairness and balance — are what we are required to achieve.

What does this mean in practice?

First, proposals must deal not only with the question of expansion but also with how that expansion should be distributed, bearing in mind that the Charter has always made provision for a geographical allocation of seats on the Council.

Secondly, proposals should not be made that are narrowly limited with regard to the nature of the expansion they propose. For instance, it would be very unwise for any delegation to propose that the Assembly take action on an increase in the number of permanent members alone. Any attempt at such a process would be doomed to failure at the ratification stage.

Thirdly, given the difficulties that stand in the way of achieving consensus on the question of new permanent members — especially given the near-universal opposition to extending the veto — any concrete proposal, to have a realistic chance of success, needs to contain options for handling the aspirations of those States with an expressed and widely supported interest in relatively regular membership. For my delegation the key to the successful handling of such aspirations is to look at solutions that are regionally based. Different regions have quite different approaches. For some, competitive elections will be the way ahead; others may prefer some form of

intra-regional arrangement on representation. But whatever approach is adopted, we believe that a measure of accountability based on performance should be at the heart of any reform.

Fourthly — a point worth making when we speak of accountability — perhaps any amendment to the Charter should include a provision that no Member State that is in arrears in its financial contributions should expect to be on the Council.

Fifthly, while it is not essential to reconfigure the regional groups as part of this exercise, the Australian proposal demonstrates why we might need to do so. This suggests that any comprehensive proposal will need to take account of that aspect.

Sixthly, to move forward we shall need to examine, in the context of concrete proposals, other necessary adjustments to the Charter. For example, if we were to remove the prohibition against the immediate re-election of non-permanent members would there be a need for the insertion, instead, of some alternative provision, such as a rule that no non-permanent member should be elected to serve more than four years out of six or eight years out of 10?

Finally, I need to address the second but no less important limb of the Working Group's mandate and of our draft resolution — the "related matters". For my delegation, reforming the way the Security Council operates is every bit as important as reforming its membership. Indeed, New Zealand suggests that, even if we were able to achieve the perfect size and balance, we would still have almost all the problems we have today unless the members of the new Security Council changed the Council's ways of doing business.

I am not going to repeat what we have said in the Working Group, where we reviewed the useful improvements that have already been made in Security Council practice — which we applaud — and the very many more changes that need to be made in the near future.

New Zealand feels some small sense of accomplishment in that, along with a number of like-minded colleagues on the Security Council, it has played a role in beginning to make the necessary changes. But we have some very important unfinished business. I am referring to the urgent need for reform in the Security Council's practice in respect of consultation with countries contributing troops to peace-keeping operations and with regional countries. Together with Argentina, we have circulated in the Security Council a draft resolution on this subject.

We are working very hard to achieve consensus on this proposal. We value the very wide support and encouragement that has been forthcoming from the members of the General Assembly, and we would appreciate further such input.

Mr. Kharrazi (Islamic Republic of Iran): As one of the principal organs of the United Nations, the Security Council has had conferred on it by the Members of the Organization responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Unfortunately, the Council was unable to play the role expected of it, especially during the cold war era, when bloc rivalries were the most prominent characteristic of international relations.

Moreover, the exercise of the veto by the permanent members, in the service of their self-interests at the expense of global peace, moved the Council in a direction which, on numerous occasions — threats to peace, breaches of the peace or acts of aggression — prevented it from acting on behalf of the entire membership of the Organization.

However, new international circumstances have created added responsibilities for the United Nations, and this fact makes it all the more imperative that the Security Council be reformed to enable it to discharge its duties in a more efficient and effective manner.

During the past year the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council considered some aspects of reform of the Council. In our view — and this is something that has been said by others — the current composition of the Security Council does not represent the general membership of the United Nations. At present, the indications are that developed countries are over-represented while the developing countries are under-represented. That being the case, every effort should be made to ensure equitable and balanced representation in the Council. The new composition of the Council should be based on the sovereign equality of States and on equitable regional representation.

While enlargement of the Security Council is a matter of importance, it is not an end in itself but a means of improving the ways in which the Council shoulders its responsibilities. More important, the Council's working methods and procedures, as well as its decision-making process, need to be improved. In this regard, my delegation wishes to underline several points.

First, the Security Council has failed to adopt a balanced approach in dealing with different crises, and some permanent members have persisted in the application of double standards. This is inimical to the credibility and legitimacy of the Council. One vivid example in this regard is the Council's approach to the aggression against the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Council's questionable handling of the crisis.

Secondly, while my delegation recognizes the need for the holding of appropriate informal consultations among members of the Council, some mechanism should be devised to inform, and if required consult with, non-members of the Council. Since the Council's effectiveness is intertwined with the commitment of the Member States, it is essential to retain the moral legitimacy of the Council by ensuring the participation of Member States in the decision-making process. It is unfortunate to note that in some cases even non-permanent members of the Council are not consulted.

Thirdly, a new balance should be struck between the General Assembly and the Security Council to fill the existing gap between the general membership and the Council. In this context, the jurisdiction and prerogative of the General Assembly with respect to international peace and security should not be overlooked. Moreover, on the basis of Article 24, paragraph 3, of the Charter, the Security Council should submit annual reports to the General Assembly for its consideration. It goes without saying that the Council should present comprehensive and analytical reports to the Assembly rather than a compilation of document symbols and references.

Fourthly, veto power is incompatible with the objective of democratizing the United Nations. This power, which has lost its *raison d'être*, must therefore be removed or at least drastically revised and brought into line with the reform of the United Nations so that a democratic process of decision-making may be achieved. As my Foreign Minister pointed out before this General Assembly, just two weeks ago:

> "If we are sincere in our belief that the world is so changed that we must eliminate all references to 'enemy States' from the Charter, then why not also acknowledge that there is no further justification for holding on to privileges granted to the war victors of that time?" *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-ninth Session, Plenary Meetings, 5th meeting, p. 38)*

In conclusion, my delegation pledges its full cooperation in the work of the Open-ended Working Group. It is our hope that the Group's work will be transparent and that there will not just be a predetermined formula presented to the membership as a whole for approval.

Mr. Martinez Blanco (Honduras) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: I am highly honoured to speak on behalf of the countries of Central America: Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama.

Central America has been following the question of equitable representation on, and increase in, the membership of the Security Council since the item was first included in the programme of work of the General Assembly, in 1979.

This issue, which is now included in the agenda of this current session of the General Assembly as item 33, was already a subject of consideration in the course of the forty-eighth session of this Assembly. Indeed, by its resolution 48/26 of 3 December 1993, the General Assembly took note of the report of the Secretary-General, which reflected the view of a number of Member States on the item in question. Our region notes with gratitude the report presented by the Open-ended Working Group on equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council — document A/48/47, dated 2 September 1994.

That report gives a brief account of the work carried out, but it does not offer any conclusions or state any tangible results achieved on this issue. It is our hope that some agreement or understanding on this matter will be reached shortly.

Equitable representation on the Security Council and an increase in its membership — as has been clearly reflected in the statements made by the Heads of State, heads of delegations and Ministers of Foreign Affairs who have addressed the General Assembly at this session — are the unanimous desire of the international

community. Reform of the Security Council is urgent: this fact is reflected in the documents issued by the Opened-ended Working Group established by the President of the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session and in the meetings of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, as well as by all the various international forums at which this issue has been addressed.

Thus, as the States of Central America see it, it is necessary to revise the membership of the Security Council on the basis of the principle of equitable geographical distribution — which will make it possible to increase the number of permanent and non-permanent members on the most democratic basis possible — while studying the desirability of creating a new category of semi-permanent members, as suggested in the Open-ended Working Group. At the same time, thought needs to be given to the basic indicators that would enable us to establish, in an appropriate way, the number of members.

Equitable representation for the States Members of the United Nations is all the more important in that, in accordance with the Charter, the decisions taken by the Security Council are taken on behalf of all Member States, even though all Member States are represented only in the General Assembly. For this reason, the Security Council should achieve greater coordination and transparency in its activities in order to prevent a situation in which it would have primacy over other organs of the United Nations.

The Central American States take the view that a Security Council with equitable and democratic representation would place our Organization in a better position to fulfil its purposes and principles, and would thus give greater legitimacy to its decisions, which aim essentially at ensuring the maintenance of international peace and security, respect for human rights and protection of the environment.

It is our hope that genuine and thorough reform of the Security Council, grounded in democratic principles of equitable geographical distribution of seats, would provide for greater participation in the work of the Council for all Members of the United Nations, including small States and, in general, all those States that have never had the opportunity to participate in the Council's work. From this standpoint, the proposals put forward by a number of eminent persons at the current session of the General Assembly are extremely useful. Once they have been carefully studied, they may well serve as the basis for a text that reflects the objectives we all seek to achieve.

The countries of the Central American region believe that any reform formula that is adopted should, in any event, go hand in hand with corresponding reform to the Charter of the Organization and at the same time provide for the total and absolute removal of the right of veto, a right currently enjoyed by the five permanent members.

The right of veto should not be granted to any State in any circumstances, whether they may be called permanent or semi-permanent members, for that right is an anachronism which 50 years ago may perhaps have had some logical justification, since the world was just awakening from the nightmare of the Second World War. But at the present time, now that the cold war is over, the right of veto no longer has any justification or *raison d'être*. Its total and utter removal will serve fully to safeguard the principle of the sovereign equality of States Members of this Organization, contained in Article 2 (1) of the Charter.

Some months ago, the Secretary-General proposed "An Agenda for Peace", and recently he has set forth the principles that should form the basis of "An Agenda for Development". International conferences addressing various economic, social and humanitarian questions have been held at the highest level. It is in this context that we believe that the highest political decision-making body of our Organization should be democratized, and reflect the new state of affairs prevailing today.

On 31 January 1992, a summit meeting of the Security Council was held. Heads of State or Government and Foreign Ministers at that meeting, particularly those of the permanent members of the Council, undertook to strengthen the work of the Organization and to make it effective in order to act rapidly, firmly and impartially. But in practice, the results of that meeting have been fairly meagre, and the credibility of the Organization has quite often been questioned. The next Security Council summit meeting to be held early in 1995 and the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of our Organization provide us with an opportunity to reaffirm and bolster its role, in particular the role of the Security Council, in order to realize mankind's aspirations to peace, security and sustainable development.

In conclusion, the Central American States — the Republics of Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama — reaffirm their view that after 50 years of existence a serious and thorough review of the Charter of the United Nations is called for,

particularly where the Security Council is concerned, in order to adapt it to the times in which we live.

Mr. Cassar (Malta): Allow me at the outset to congratulate the President of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session. Malta fondly recalls the service of Côte d'Ivoire on the Security Council 30 years ago when, in 1964, Malta became a Member of the United Nations.

This session of the Assembly is particularly fortunate in having the current President presiding over the discussion of this item, particularly in view of his experience as President of the Security Council in January 1990, and as representative of his country during Côte d'Ivoire's second term on the Council. On both occasions, Côte d'Ivoire served the international community with great dedication.

Service on the Security Council is an onerous task, which Malta shared when it served during its term in 1983-1984.

Emerging from the cold-war era with an authority and effectiveness that belie its many years of sterility, the Security Council is also, however, clearly in need of functional reform. Addressing this issue at the Institute of International Relations in Budapest earlier this year, Malta's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Guido de Marco, stated that

> "Any consideration of reform of the Security Council, be this in terms of composition or of the working methods, is surrounded by the legitimate concern that no proposed action should impair its existing vitality. The real dilemma lies, however, in the fact that its present course of action could, if it remains unsupported by some measure of reform, itself lead to an undermining of this vitality".

This is the principal criterion that has guided the delegation of Malta in its approach to the discussion on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council.

Conscious as it is of the legitimate concern that no proposed action should impair the Council's existing vitality, my Government ascribes great importance to this debate for the future evolution of the United Nations.

Notwithstanding the complex issues involved, we have made a good start and notable progress. Under the able chairmanship of the President of the General Assembly, Ambassador Insanally, and his two Vice-Chairmen, the Open-ended Working Group established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 48/26 of 3 December 1993 held 22 meetings.

Delegations, my own included, engaged in frank and constructive discussions and expressed themselves on all items under consideration by the Working Group, including the relationship of the Security Council with the General Assembly, the regional distribution on the Council, the categories of membership and the Security Council's working methods, procedures and decision-making.

In deciding to establish the Open-ended Working Group, General Assembly resolution 48/26 recalls that the Members of the United Nations confer on the Security Council

> "primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and agree that in carrying out its duty under this responsibility the Security Council acts on their behalf".

The need to review the membership of the Security Council and related matters was recognized in view of the substantial increase in the membership of the United Nations as well as the changes in international relations. Bearing in mind the need to continue to enhance the efficiency of the Security Council, the Assembly reaffirmed the principle of the sovereign equality of all Members of the United Nations.

My Government feels that equitable representation is primarily linked to a qualitative, rather than quantitative, change in the relationship between the Council and the rest of the United Nations membership.

The present ongoing debate has already generated some beneficial developments in this regard. My delegation, like others, welcomes the improvements made to date, such as daily publication in the *Journal* of the provisional agenda; the monthly circulation of the Council's tentative forecast of its programme of work; the availability of Security Council draft resolutions in "blue" at the same time Council members receive them; and the briefings by the President of the Security Council to the President of the General Assembly and the Chairmen of the regional groups.

Another important and welcome development is the Security Council's more elaborate consultations with

present and potential troop contributors on different aspects of peace-keeping operations. This practice — particularly beneficial prior to the setting up of a peace-keeping operation — could be of inspiration in fostering consultations with interested parties on other issues on which the Security Council may decide.

Important as they are, these changes on their own do not resolve the wider question, that is, whether the rest of the United Nations membership should remain a passive, however well-informed, bystander at the Council's deliberations.

There is good cause to believe that both a reasonable increase in the membership of the Security Council and an appraisal and review of the rights of its members would constitute positive measures of reform. The Security Council was expanded from 11 to 15 members in 1965 to reflect the growth in United Nations membership from the original 51 to 113. Malta believes that further expansion of the Security Council is now warranted in order to reflect today's United Nations membership of 184 States.

At the same time, we believe, as do others, that one of the major strengths of the Security Council lies in its limited membership. For this reason, my delegation would support a prudent increase of not more than 10 seats.

An increase in Security Council membership would still leave the vast majority of United Nations Member States outside this inner circle. It is therefore in terms of the manner in which this inner circle, however constituted, is seen to act in response to the concerns of the wider membership that the most urgent measures relating to the Security Council must be contemplated. In this context, the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly assumes far-reaching importance.

A revitalized General Assembly gains greater authority and credibility as it increasingly transforms itself into the effective organ through which the necessary collective input into the deliberations of other components of the United Nations system, not least the Security Council, could be made. This enhanced symbiotic relationship is positive in itself in that it helps ward off situations of possible dissonance between these two main organs.

Addressing an experts' meeting at the Foundation for International Studies in Valletta to discuss the theme "A Second-Generation United Nations", my Foreign Minister last week stressed the need for enhanced cooperation between the Security Council and the General Assembly. Professor de Marco cautioned against

> "a situation where the thinking of the Security Council could be in divergence with that of the General Assembly. If this happens, the effectiveness and the efficiency of the Security Council will be put into doubt".

In this spirit, we welcome the adoption of General Assembly resolution 48/264 on 17 August 1994 entitled "Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly", and in particular operative paragraph 4, which invites the President of the General Assembly

> "to propose appropriate ways and means to facilitate an in-depth discussion by the Assembly of matters contained in the reports submitted to it by the Security Council."

An increase in the membership of the Security Council could only enhance the existing confidence of the broader United Nations membership in its decisions and would further buttress the Council's authority.

The membership issue and the question of the status of different members on the Security Council have assumed predominance throughout our deliberations in the Open-ended Working Group.

If there is a linear expansion of the existing categories of the Council, we shall be comforted by the knowledge of a working method which we have witnessed to date. Like any other gradual, quantitative evolution, however, it has its merits and its drawbacks.

On the other hand, the introduction of new categories of membership is challenging, and, like any challenge, at one and the same time stimulates our institutional creativity but generates that sense of cautious awareness necessarily encountered when formulating new mechanisms.

My Government is giving serious thought and consideration to the whole range of proposals submitted to date. We all are conscious of our grave responsibility. The reforms we will ultimately adopt will be as long-lasting as they are equitable and able to reflect a constantly evolving international reality.

Like others, we have expressed the hope that through the full cooperation of all Member States, the

Working Group will endeavour to conclude its work by next year in order to make its results coincide with the fiftieth anniversary. This is a time-frame that should encourage us in seeking common ground on which to build constructively — not an ever-shortening fuse to force upon us solutions of which we may not be fully convinced. In our deliberations, we must constantly ensure that form follows substance, rather than vice versa.

Any reform, be it in terms of composition or of working methods, while reflecting more accurately the current international situation, must continue to make the work of the Security Council more transparent but retain within the Council that quality of *realpolitik* that is a basic ingredient of inter-State relations.

My delegation pledges its full cooperation in the endeavours of the Working Group. A firm commitment to the principles of the Charter should inspire us in this debate as it does in others. Our interest must remain that of ensuring "prompt and effective action by the United Nations" in the "maintenance of international peace and security".

Mr. Ould Ely (Mauritania) *(interpretation from French):* Since this is the first time I have spoken before the Assembly in my new capacity as Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, may I be allowed to say how pleased and honoured I am to see Mr. Amara Essy presiding over the Assembly's work at this session. His country, Côte d'Ivoire, where I had the privilege to serve, is for us Mauritanians a model of wisdom and moderation and a resolute champion in the promotion of the ideals of peace, solidarity and cooperation embodied in our Organization.

The question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters, which is the subject of today's debate, is without any doubt an important matter that requires sustained efforts and a convergence of views that can enable us to attain the objectives we all desire. In this context, we welcome the progress already made in this area under the chairmanship of President Essy's predecessor, Ambassador Samuel Insanally, with the assistance of Vice-Chairmen Wilhelm Breitenstein of Finland and Chew Tai Soo of Singapore.

We also salute the intention of the President of the General Assembly at this session to continue this effort with the assistance of the same team. Such continuity will no doubt make it possible for us to speed up our work and keep it on the right path. As always, Mauritania will make a positive contribution to our common endeavour.

The end of the cold war, the many developments that have taken place on the international scene, the substantial increase in United Nations activities in the areas of peace and security and the growing universality of the Organization clearly require us now to adapt our structures and methods of work to these circumstances. In view of the changes that have taken place in our governing bodies over recent years, the Security Council should not be excluded from the modifications made necessary by the new international situation. This is why we have always supported and will continue to support efforts aimed at both expanding the Council's membership so that it can reflect the realities of today's world and making it more able to deal effectively with the many challenges it faces.

There is no doubt that both the universality of our Organization and the Charter itself, which in Article 24 confers on the Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, call for the Council to act swiftly and effectively and also to take into account the interests of all States, without distinction. This is why the question of equitable representation is of crucial importance. Indeed, since the Council acts on behalf of the States Members of the Organization and its decisions are binding on them, it is essential that it be seen as an entity whose legitimacy, equity and credibility are beyond all doubt. Hence, enlarging the Council can only strengthen it by enabling it to respond effectively and appropriately to present-day realities. In this light, the Council should reflect all currents of thought and all geographical regions of the world.

The membership of the Council is a key issue, but its operation and its methods of work are no less important; they, too, need to be adapted to new realities. In this context, we welcome the measures already agreed on concerning its methods of work, particularly the timely adoption and presentation of reports to the General Assembly. However, we believe that further work must be done to establish more effective cooperation and coordination with the General Assembly on a more solid and consistent basis, because the General Assembly is still the forum in which all States can freely and democratically express their views. The largest possible number of States must be able to participate in the decision-making process, and this also calls for greater transparency, which is always the foundation of democracy and accountability.

Like the vast majority of Members of our Organization, my country subscribes to the idea of a broadly representative, transparent and democratic Security Council. This is why we believe it is essential for the Open-ended Working Group on this issue to continue its efforts to discharge the mandate entrusted to it under resolution 48/26, adopted at the General Assembly's last session. We hope that at the fiftieth session the Working Group will submit to us a detailed and comprehensive report that justifies our efforts. We have no doubt that the upcoming summit of the countries members of the Security Council, to be held in January next year, will provide new impetus for our work in this area. May our efforts meet with great success.

Mr. Shambos (Cyprus): I would like at the outset to express our deep appreciation to Ambassador Insanally of Guyana, who chaired the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council, and to welcome the report of the Working Group.

Since its admission to the United Nations in 1960, Cyprus has consistently been a strong supporter of the United Nations, whose principles and objectives form the cornerstone of our foreign policy.

Being a small country, we entrust our security and our very existence to the United Nations. We want to see it further strengthened and the spheres of its activities expanded. We believe that in this emerging new world order it is more necessary than ever that the United Nations be capable of fulfilling the role entrusted to it by the Charter as the guarantor of peace, security and social justice in the world.

It is against this background that we consider that improvements to the effectiveness and credibility of the decision-making organ of the United Nations are both urgent and compelling. The Security Council, which the Charter entrusts with the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, needs to undergo quantitative changes corresponding to the dramatic increase of the membership of the United Nations, as well as qualitative adjustments to the method of its work that will maintain the democratic processes which form the basis of the United Nations.

The Security Council is indeed faced with enormous tasks. Its mandatory decisions, which are binding on all Members and have immense impact on millions of people, must be reached in such a way as to reflect fully the wishes and positions of the United Nations membership and the international community. Expansion of the Security Council is therefore imperative, while the qualitative changes referred to above are indispensable. Expansion alone, however, will not solve every problem. There must be accountability in the membership and strict and objective persistence in the implementation of its resolutions and the openness of its operations.

Several most useful ideas have emerged during this debate and in the discussions of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council. In the context of greater transparency in the Security Council's decision-making processes, various measures have been suggested. We consider most of these proposals, and particularly that concerning the participation of non-members in the informal consultations of the Council, to be extremely important. For we should not forget that, under the prevailing conditions and procedures, inadequate transparency has led to bitter experiences, to say the least, for many, including my country. We look forward to the intensification of these discussions during the present session. We believe that any enlargement must take into consideration equitable geographical representation as well as the need to increase the transparency of its work and — I repeat — its accountability to the wider membership.

While the matter of increase in the membership of the Security Council is pressing, final decisions as to its enlargement must be carefully weighed and fully debated. Any hasty treatment of this most serious subject will not provide a just solution to this issue. The reform and expansion of the Security Council should include measures geared to reforming its working methods and procedures. There is also a need to enhance the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly in accordance with the relevant provisions of the United Nations Charter.

Non-selectivity, impartiality and absolute and genuine respect for the sovereign equality of States should be the guiding standards in the process of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council. Genuine adherence to and a proven record in upholding the provisions and promoting the principles of the Charter should be a determining factor in the whole process.

In conclusion, may I also recall the words of President Clerides before this body on 3 October:

> "the effectiveness of the most powerful organ of the United Nations is seriously compromised if it applies double standards. It must act in every case with determination and consistency. The record of its performance indicates clearly that in those cases where the international community has shown steadfastness to defend the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter and fully to implement its provisions, peace and justice was achieved. On the contrary, in those cases where unity of purpose had not been exhibited or the interests of nations or alliances had been placed above the universal principles and the rule of law, the problems remain and peace is elusive." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-ninth Session, Plenary Meetings, 14th meeting, p. 2)*

Mr. Remirez de Estenoz Barciela (Cuba) *(interpretation from Spanish):* There can be no doubt whatsoever that the question before us is one of the most significant and important of this session, a fact that has been forcefully confirmed by the many references to the need for democracy in the Security Council in the statements of almost every delegation in the recently concluded general debate and by the impressive number of delegations who have spoken on this subject before me.

We hope that the opinions expressed here will be useful to the Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly created for this issue when it resumes its work in January next year. In 1994, the Working Group has held a useful albeit general exchange of views under the wise and capable leadership of Ambassador Samuel Insanally, Permanent Representative of Guyana, and the Permanent Representatives of Singapore and Finland, whom we thank for a job well done.

The Chairman of the Movement of Non-aligned Countries has already spoken on this item on behalf of the members of the Movement. Allow me, first of all, to express my delegation's full support of his statement, which fully reflects the spirit prevailing not only at the Jakarta Summit but also in the Ministerial Meetings of the non-aligned countries that took place in Cairo and New York this year. We feel that it is nevertheless appropriate to outline some clarifications of Cuba's position on this issue.

Cuba considers that the necessary restructuring of the Security Council has a variety of closely interwoven aspects which are part and parcel of the same comprehensive process. I am referring to the increase in the membership of the Council on the one hand and to the strict application of the principle of equitable geographic distribution on the other, as well as to the introduction of reforms that would enhance transparency in the Council's work and ensure that it restrict itself to the powers and prerogatives conferred upon it by the Charter.

Of course, another integral part of this complex process is the revitalization of the General Assembly and, above all, the re-establishment of appropriate links between the Assembly and the Council, making the latter duly accountable to the former, as provided for in the Charter. It should be recalled that, in accordance with Article 24 of the Charter, the Security Council acts on behalf of all Members of this Organization and is accountable to them. Thus, the General Assembly, as the only United Nations body in which all Member States participate, has the right and duty to be duly informed of the activities of the Council and to make whatever recommendations it considers necessary.

In his statement, the Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement examined the historical relationship between the way in which the total membership of the Organization and that of the Security Council have evolved, clearly showing that the present proportions leave a great deal to be desired and must be substantially changed.

But, in my country's view, such change must be based, for all categories of membership, on strict application of the principle of equitable geographical distribution, which must be the fundamental criterion for determining which countries should be members of the Council. Hence, Cuba supports not only a substantial increase in non-permanent seats for the three regions of developing countries, but also the granting of permanent membership to two countries in Africa, two countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, and two developing countries in Asia, which would bring us closer to the equitable geographical distribution we advocate. In this context, we fully share the view of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries that any predetermined selection that excludes non-aligned and other developing countries would be unacceptable.

Of course, we are ready to consider thoroughly and flexibly the numerous formulas that have been proposed both in the Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly and during the general debate at this session, including the creation of new categories of Security Council membership. We believe that consideration of these issues should be exhaustive and complete, and even if it takes some time we hope no one will yield to the temptation of trying to shorten the process by seeking a ruling from the General Assembly before conditions are sufficiently ripe and without having achieved the necessary consensus on formulas for increasing the membership of the Security Council.

That some regions are over-represented in the Security Council while others are under-represented is without question detrimental to the interests of the Council itself and to the Council's authority and credibility. In our view, in the light of the increasing importance it has acquired in recent years, it is in the Council's own interest that there should be a maximal democratization of its composition and structures. Increasing the Council's representativeness would lend it greater legitimacy.

But, it must be clear that an increase in membership alone would not be sufficient to ensure this legitimacy. As part of the same negotiating package, we must also take account of the question of the Council's working methods and procedures. We believe that the Council would also gain practical benefits from wide-ranging reform in these important areas, and that it should be in the interest of Council members also to hold increasingly broad consultations with non-members to keep them informed of the Council's activities and involve them in the work of the Council as much as possible. In that way, the Council would not only be responding adequately to the continued appeals for transparency increasingly voiced in this Organization, but would also be improving the Council's image in the eyes of the international community and increasing its effectiveness by making its decisions more legitimate and credible.

We recognize that in the past two years measures have been taken to improve the level of information available to States non-members of the Council, but much remains to be done. As measures in this area would not require Charter reforms but only changes in the operating methods of the Council, we think that it would be appropriate to move forward in this field simultaneously with the Open-ended Working Group's negotiations on equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Council.

In the Final Document it adopted during its recent ministerial meeting held in Cairo, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries included a set of proposals on reform of the functioning of the Security Council, proposals that have been reiterated in this debate by the Chairman of the Movement and by other colleagues. In our view, these should be duly taken into account in this process of restructuring the Council.

Of course, a salient feature of the Council's procedures is the question of the anachronistic veto, whether exercised openly or covertly. My country's position on this issue is very well known and I will not repeat it here.

As I said before, the Charter provisions regulating the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly should be fully restored; the leading role of the Assembly should be recognized. In this context, we must refer to the annual report of the Security Council and how it should be presented, an issue to which the non-aligned countries have repeatedly referred and which we shall address later in the session when the subject is dealt with at the session. Nor can we ignore the provisions of the Charter that allow the General Assembly to make recommendations to the Council regarding its structure and methods of operation. In Cuba's view, this important aspect should be discussed until we reach solutions that are satisfactory to all.

This has been a brief summary of my country's position on this item; these are in full accord with those endorsed by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. We are ready to continue working in the Assembly's Open-ended Working Group, and I assure members that we will spare no effort to reach consensus solutions reflecting the vital interest of the international community in making the Security Council as democratic as possible.

Mr. Nobilo (Croatia): I take this opportunity to convey my delegation's deep appreciation to Ambassador Samuel Insanally, who, as President of the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session, led the Working Group on this item, and to the Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group, Ambassador Breitenstein and Ambassador Chew. Thanks to their wise leadership, we have made great advances on this subject.

As we approach the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, it is only appropriate that we should intensify our analysis of the functioning of the United Nations and seriously consider possible reforms

with a view to improving its work. In this regard, the present debate concerning the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council, and related matters, is timely and pertinent.

This is particularly true since the Security Council is the organ of the United Nations which has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and which, in carrying out its duties, acts on behalf of Member States. Therefore, any discussion of the composition and functioning of the Security Council is of extreme importance and should be approached with all the necessary gravity and seriousness and in a manner which takes into consideration global interests and not just the individual interests of States.

In terms of its composition, permanent membership of the Security Council should not be limited to the coalition of the victors of the Second World War or to the nuclear club of the super-Powers. New political and economic realities must be taken into account and due regard must be given to ensuring a proper geographical balance as well as to the increase in the membership of the United Nations. Due to their firm adherence to democratic principles and to their active and valuable involvement in the interest of maintaining international peace and security, Croatia is of the opinion that Germany and Japan deserve to be permanent members of the Security Council.

Furthermore, we hold that developing countries should be better represented in the Security Council, not only as a result of their number and broad geographical distribution, but because of the political and economic influence of many of these countries and the constructive role which they have played in international affairs, including peace-keeping. Serious consideration should be given to granting permanent member status to one or more of these countries or to establishing a system whereby certain regionally influential States should be allowed to sit in the Security Council more often. Of course, Croatia would respect the decision reached by the developing States as to how they prefer to be better represented in the Council.

My delegation also wishes to reiterate the need to keep the interests of small States in mind when considering the enlargement of the Security Council. In keeping with the principle of sovereign equality of States, we are of the opinion that a mechanism should be established by which small States are guaranteed a voice in the Council through a balanced rotation of non-permanent seats.

Any enlargement of the Council must be done in such a way as not to impair the efficiency of its work. It is obvious that the Security Council, regardless of its size, may be inefficient if there is no political will to make important decisions or if action is blocked by a veto or threatened veto by one or more of its permanent members. However, practical experience leads us to conclude that any large increase in the membership of the Council could lead to inefficiency in its work by overloading it with the ballast of oversized bureaucracy. Therefore, it is important to increase membership by an amount by which the efficiency of the Council will not be sacrificed in order to make it more representative. In this light, it is our opinion that the increase in membership should be done in such a way as to ensure that the total number of members of the Security Council does not exceed 25.

In addition to the issue of the composition of the Security Council, other important matters relating to the work of the Council deserve full consideration. Among these is the issue of the power of the veto. The Republic of Croatia wishes to reiterate its general position that there should be a limitation of the right and practice of the veto. However, since it is unlikely that the power of veto will soon be abolished, the Republic of Croatia is of the view that the proposal of requiring at least two vetoes to be cast in order to nullify a Security Council resolution deserves serious consideration. This proposal is even more appropriate in a Security Council with an increased number of permanent members.

Transparency in the work of the Security Council is also of great concern for the Republic of Croatia. While we applaud recent improvements which have increased the transparency of the Council, it is our firm opinion that much more can be done in this regard. A better method of communicating information on the deliberations in the informal consultations should be devised. Also, we view with favour the proposal that documents made available to the Security Council, as well as summaries of informal consultations, should be made available to interested Member States.

Croatia also supports improvement in the cooperation between the only body in which all Member States are represented — the General Assembly — and the Security Council. In this regard, regular briefings by the President of the Security Council to the General Assembly would be helpful.

My delegation also fully agrees that there is a need for greater consultation by the Security Council with troop-contributing countries, with third countries affected by sanctions and with States situated in regions experiencing conflict. However, we also wish to stress the need for greater consultations by the Council with troop-hosting States — that is, States which have allowed United Nations peace-keeping forces on their territory — as these are among the States which are most affected by Council decisions.

In conclusion, we wish to address the issue of effectiveness of the Security Council. The Republic of Croatia is situated in a crisis region which has so far been the source of more than 70 Security Council resolutions — all in the last three years. Yet many of these resolutions have not been implemented or have only been partially implemented. We wish to stress that for the Security Council to be effective it must ensure that its resolutions are fully implemented — not only in our region, but in general. Otherwise, not only may there be a loss of credibility of the Security Council and the United Nations, but the very principles of allowable international behaviour which have been formed in the last 50 years, and the very values which the international community has committed itself to, may seriously be at stake.

Mr. Valencia Rodriguez (Ecuador) *(interpretation from Spanish):* The question now before us has been thoroughly discussed by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, of which Ecuador is a member. I wish to add a few brief comments.

First, may I convey my delegation's congratulations to Ambassadors Insanally, Breitenstein and Chew, the Chairman and Vice-Chairmen respectively of the Working Group established by the General Assembly to address this question. The work done by the Working Group permitted a broad-ranging exchange of views aimed at ensuring better functioning of the Security Council in such a way that its activities, on behalf of all Members of the Organization, may strengthen its credibility and reaffirm its legitimacy.

A broad range of helpful proposals have been made in the course of the Group's work. We hope that during this session we can build consensus on the fundamental issues so that the decisions taken at the end of the negotiating process may receive the support of all delegations.

Ecuador supports the initiatives aimed at ensuring greater transparency in the work of the Council, including establishing a system of regular consultations with States affected by a given conflict, with troop-contributing States and with regional groups, as well as the establishment of machinery allowing for a more fluid relationship between the Assembly and the Council, so that the Council's activities may reflect the majority view of the Organization. The practice of holding informal consultations behind closed door tends to diminish trust in the activities of the Council.

As part of this endeavour to improve the Council's procedures, it is essential to address the question of the veto, a mechanism that we have repeatedly repudiated as anti-democratic. I refer members to document A/48/264 at page 36. Other delegations have already discussed in detail the historical factors underlying the adoption of that practice and the reasons that now prompt us to restrict it and eventually abolish it. A number of different formulas have been offered, ranging from determining issues on which the veto could not be used to requiring that the veto be exercised only if two States that were entitled to do so cast vetoes.

I am sure that the broad range of the proposals that have been made will enable the Working Group to find acceptable formulas which will strike a balance between the rights of the permanent members and the pressing need for the Council to act in strict conformity with Article 24 of the Charter so that national interests, however powerful, are properly coordinated with the common aims of mankind represented here.

Ecuador's legal tradition is the same as that of the rest of Latin America. It is a tradition that regards law as the basis for relations between States. Thus we are concerned at the trend that has developed in practice in the Council of widening, at its discretion, the powers vested in it by the Charter. The argument that the Council is a political body cannot exempt it from adhering to the norms of international law, particularly now when there is an increasing number of inter-State conflicts and many changes on the world scene. For this reason Ecuador is inclined to favour the proposals that the Security Council should act under constitutional control, in conformity with the mechanisms that are regarded as appropriate.

The Assembly will be called upon at the proper time to take decisions on the way in which the Council works and on its enlargement. Ecuador recognizes and supports the legitimate aspirations of countries such as Germany, Brazil and Japan and countries of Asia and Africa to be represented on the Council as permanent members. These

aspirations should be considered in the context of the need to respect equitable geographical distribution for all regions and the imbalance that currently exists in favour of one region, both among the permanent and among the non-permanent members. My delegation is extremely flexible in this regard and has considered with interest the alternative proposals presented by various delegations, for example Italy, which we believe can pave the way to the desired consensus.

Ecuador believes that the necessary reorganization of the Council cannot be carried out simply by increasing the number of its permanent or non-permanent members. We are convinced that if negotiations go on simultaneously on the questions of the functioning of the Council and the enlargement of its membership, and if a comprehensive approach is taken that avoids reducing the debate to mere arithmetics or to an attempt to solve problems in the short term, the Working Group will be able to adopt changes that will lay the foundation for a Security Council equipped to tackle the difficult challenges it will face in the immediate future.

Mr. Rahman (Bangladesh): My delegation associates itself with the tributes paid to Ambassador Insanally, Chairman of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council, and its two Vice-Chairmen, Ambassador Breitenstein of Finland and Ambassador Chew Tai Soo of Singapore.

We welcome the recommendation that the Open-ended Working Group continue its work, taking into account views expressed at the forty-ninth session, and submit a report to the General Assembly before the end of the session.

Our priority objective remains to forge a meaningful consensus for much-needed reform and restructuring of the Security Council in a comprehensive manner that would make it more representative, credible and legitimate; strengthen its relations with other organs, especially the General Assembly; and improve its methods of working and procedures so that it would be more efficient, effective, transparent and accountable.

Over the past year we have entered into a sustained process of dialogue and discussion on a progressively substantive basis, highlighting the importance attached by Member States to this issue. Background papers have been compiled by the Secretariat on views expressed in writing or orally since the forty-seventh and forty-eighth sessions and on substantive discussions on six cluster issues from March to May 1994. Since then, follow-up discussions in June, the non-paper of the President of the General Assembly, views expressed by Indonesia as Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement, and statements by individual countries at the forty-ninth session have all provided a considered body of opinion on this subject-matter.

Bangladesh's viewpoints have also been articulated in the course of this exercise. We would briefly like to highlight the following.

First and foremost, there is palpable recognition of the need for change in the Security Council to make it conform to a radically transformed world community and world situation. The approach, in our opinion, must be holistic and comprehensive in nature, touching on both its membership and its mandate.

Secondly, there seems to be a universal convergence of views that the membership of the Council should be enlarged. However, differences still persist on the scope, composition and nature of such an expansion. A central dilemma relates to increasing the permanent membership. We are confronted with balancing conflicting principles touching on the sovereign equality of Member States and the democratization of the United Nations, and the Non-Aligned Movement's considered position opposed to the perpetuation of current inequalities through the creation of new centres of privilege. Indeed the Non-Aligned Movement's position on the Council's decision-making process has been consistently directed at questioning the continued relevance of the veto, its possible abolition or at least the imposition of restrictions on its use. Bangladesh believes that the continued privileged status of permanent members is a matter of concern and that the objective should be to focus on limiting or removing this preserve over time. We believe, however, that if a clear consensus was to emerge in support of the expansion of the ranks of permanent members, taking into account the effectiveness and credibility of the Council in the face of new and emerging political and economic realities, we would need to take a much harder and more stringent look at the criteria and modalities for the selection of new incumbents. Objective criteria would need to be worked out above and beyond the criteria laid down under Article 23, paragraph 1, of the Charter and must, *inter alia*, include a country's capacity to serve and to contribute towards maintaining peace and security; its commitment to democratic ideals; its record in the area of human rights; and, above all, its compliance with internationally accepted covenants and the resolutions of the United

Nations. A major factor is that any such recognition as a permanent member must be achieved in conformity with the Charter and through consensus and the agreement of all Member States.

On the issue of the size of the Council, Bangladesh fully supports an expansion consistent with the increase in overall membership of the United Nations and conforming to the broadly established mathematical ratio of 10 per cent of the total United Nations membership. We believe that the base criterion of the Council's composition should be equitable geographical distribution, taking into account current membership patterns in terms of regional distribution encompassing Europe as a whole, Asia, Africa and Latin America, as well as the skewed impact on regional distribution of the five permanent members.

On broader issues, there is a wide convergence of views on improving the working methods and procedures of the Council, including institutional competence, transparency, accountability, efficiency, responsiveness and timely and well-informed decision-making consistent with the support of all Member States. Some important positive steps have already been taken, and further proposals can supplement this process.

Agenda item 120

Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/49/503)

The President: If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the report of the Fifth Committee that is before the Assembly today.

It was so decided.

The President: Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote.

The positions of delegations regarding the recommendations of the Fifth Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records.

May I remind members that under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401 the General Assembly agreed that

> "When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, that is, either in the Committee or in plenary meeting unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee."

May I also remind delegations that, again in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendation contained in the report of the Fifth Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take a decision in the same manner as was done in the Fifth Committee.

The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report (A/49/503). The draft decision was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President: We have concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 120.

The meeting rose at 12:55 p.m.